

# Turkey Creek to be tested

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CROWN POINT — Tests are expected to determine if Turkey Creek has been contaminated by a toxic waste dump since the Lake County Drainage Advisory Committee learned.

The county's request for a permit to reconstruct the channel on Turkey Creek wetlands near Hobart was deferred this spring due to its closeness to a federal Superfund site, American Chemical Services in Griffith.

The chemical company site, located about one-half mile north of Turkey Creek, was listed in 1983 as one of five sites that needed to be cleaned up with federal Superfund money.

Jean Cochran, of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began working at the site in April 1986. Cochran said EPA tests showed

groundwater around the site was contaminated, and may have traveled off-site and into the nearby creek.

Deputy Lake County Surveyor William Henderson said the permit was denied because creek sediment could stir up contaminants — if they exist — and could cause toxic materials to move downstream to further aggravate the situation.

Drainage Board President and Commissioner Ernest Niemeyer, R-Lowell, said he was advised ground borings may be taken to see if the creek is contaminated before the EPA checks it out. To wait for the EPA to do its testing, he said, could take one year or more.

The committee was told toxicity tests could cost about \$6,000. No action was taken.

Committee member Gene Krasocka said he wanted the drainage board's attorney to draft a letter to the mayor of Hobart explaining the delay in the project.

American Chemical Services was put on the Superfund list because of past practices of burying barrels of chemicals in a landfill behind company property, according to the state board of health.

In 1980, oil leaking from the site was found to contain phenol — a known carcinogen. At the time, however, the EPA said the firm had surrounded the burial site with clay, preventing the leak from spreading.

The EPA has said about 2,000 drums were buried about 18 years ago at the site near Colfax Avenue, but a local resident claimed in a report to the EPA in 1981 that 25,000 to 30,000 drums and a tank were buried at the site.

EPA officials assigned to the project would not comment on current activities at the site. Cochran said the EPA met in May with as many as 800 company representatives or their attorneys who were identified as potential toxic chemical dumpsters.

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